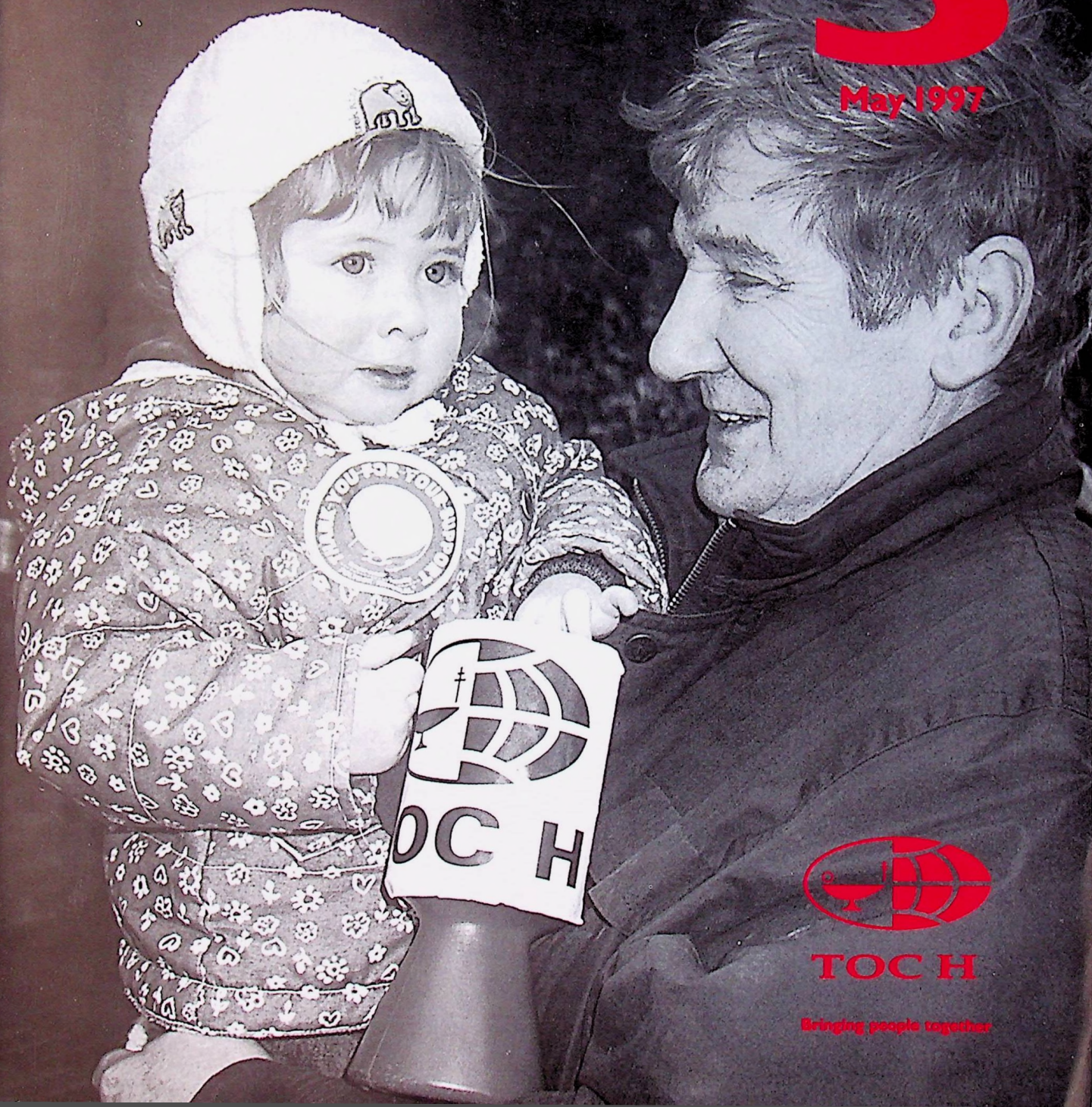


POINT

THE TOC H MAGAZINE

3

May 1997



TOC H

Bringing people together

POINT 3

Toc H is about people. Founded in 1915, Toc H fights to break down barriers by challenging individuals' preconceptions of others and the divisions which exist in society. While its work is based on Christian principles, all faiths and none are recognised and accepted.

Toc H works with people from all walks of life, tackling social problems such as loneliness, isolation or deprivation through an approach which focuses on self-help and taking responsibility for oneself and the local community.

Toc H uses the model of the compass to emphasise four personal challenges which are the inspiration for its membership. The Four Points of the Toc H Compass are:

1 **Friendship: 'To Love Widely'**

to 'welcome all in friendship'.

2 **Service: 'To Build Bravely'**

to 'give personal service'.

3 **Fairmindedness: 'To Think Fairly'**

to 'listen always to the views of others'.

4 **The Kingdom of God: 'To Witness Humbly'**
to 'acknowledge the spiritual nature of man'.

Point 3 is the magazine of Toc H, and derives its title from the third Point of the Toc H Compass. It acts as a vehicle for communication between staff and members, informing, encouraging and stimulating readers on topical and relevant issues. Contributions are welcome from any group or individual involved in Toc H.

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- A full copy of the current Editorial Policy is available on request from the Editor.
- The opinions expressed are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Editor or Toc H.
- While Point 3 is made available to all members and staff free of charge, a voluntary contribution towards the cost of production and mailing is welcomed.
- Printed on chlorine-free, environmentally-friendly paper.

Cover Photo: Adrian Dudman and Bethany Ranson, two members of the new Toc H families Group.

Toc H is an active Movement of people practising reconciliation by being open to all in friendship, offering service in the community, confronting intolerance and prejudice, and discovering a faith to live by. We bring the Toc H experience to as many people as possible to develop personal growth and build caring communities.

Registered Charity No. 211042



Dear Members and Friends

The CEC met, for the fourth meeting of the Toc H year, on April 12/13th 1997. I have set out below the main areas of discussion, together with other information. Your Central Councillors have a full briefing on these and

other matters - please contact them (or us at Central Services) if you would like to know more.

- **Central Registration** - in accordance with the Central Council resolution passed last November, we are now implementing this new system. It has not been without its difficulties and I thank you for your patience and understanding. **If you have not returned your membership renewal form as yet, please do so as soon as you can.** Meanwhile, I am discussing with Barbara Martin how we can make this whole activity simpler next year.

Please also note that whilst there is now no formal requirement for Toc H to have District Branches there is no reason why these or an equivalent structure cannot continue or be set up within your Regions. Please contact Central Councillors or Regional Chairers for local clarification.

- **Germany** - after over 50 years of working with British Forces in Germany, the Central Executive Committee has taken the hard and painful decision to withdraw Toc H. The CEC, having conducted a full investigation, can see no way of eradicating the sizeable deficit we have been incurring. This situation has been exacerbated by the continuing draw down of troops from Germany to serve with other peace-keeping forces around the world.

- **Group 88** - this is an organisation in Kent with 180 members and 5 branches whose aims, objects and work are very close to those of Toc H. After initial discussions Group 88 has made a formal request to merge with Toc H. The CEC has agreed that this should be investigated further with a view to a formal proposal coming to Central Council in November 1998.

- **Talbot House** - following the purchase of the old Concert Hall, the Talbot House Association is now formulating plans to develop this new acquisition and to enhance and promote activities focused on the Old House. The CEC has agreed to support the efforts of the Association to retrieve various historical documents relating to Talbot House from sources within the UK such as the Imperial War Museum.

- **Toc H Week** - the CEC has agreed to a proposal to introduce an annual Toc H Activities Week starting in the autumn of 1998. Planning will now begin and you will be kept fully in the picture as we progress. If anyone is interested in the planning aspect of this do please contact me.

- **Membership Development** - following the work of a CEC ad hoc group, some exciting proposals for widening the membership of Toc H are now to be taken forward and explored with a view to presenting concrete proposals at Central Council in 1998.

- **Branches** - Since the last CEC 1 Branch has closed and 2 new Toc H Groups have registered.

Finally I offer my heartfelt thanks to Toc H members in Scotland and the South West Region for making me so welcome during my recent visits to both Regions.

God Bless you all.

Mike Lyddiell

LINDRIDGE HOUSE OPENS ITS DOORS

On a glorious day in April an Open Day was held at Lindridge House offering an opportunity for individuals to view the house, the recent renovations, the extensive grounds and ongoing project work. Organised by Division Two staff and members, and the house's Management Committee, the event was well attended and guests included local dignitaries, representatives from local community bodies and the local media, staff and members. The format of the day allowed guests to meet and chat informally with those involved with the house, enjoy light refreshments, wander around the grounds and bask in the Spring sunshine.

The focus of the event was a tree planting ceremony which was preceded by a short official welcome from Mike Lyddiard, Toc H Director and Cllr Brian Rittershausen, Chairman of Kingsteignton Parish Council. Opening the ceremony Mike paid tribute to all those who had worked so hard for Lindridge House both on the Open Day and in the past and reflected on the facilities the house had to offer. In his address Cllr Rittershausen,

admitting that he had not previously heard of Lindridge House, referred to it as 'Kingsteignton's best kept secret'. He promised to make the members of his District Council more aware of the house and its facilities -



Above: Christine McCarthy, Fundraising Officer Division 2 and Cllr F. Symons, Vice Chairman, Teignbridge District Council.



From Left to right above, Cllr Brian Rittershausen, Chairman Kingsteignton District Council; Mike Lyddiard, Director of Toc H; Cllr Cyril & Mrs Margaret Channon, Mayor & Mayoress of Teignmouth; Nick Fawcett, Development Officer/Chaplain, Division 2.

the 'lost valley' as he called it.

An impressive number of local dignitaries attended the day - 8 in total - including the Mayor and Mayoress of both Teignmouth and Newton Abbot, Cllr Channon, Cllr Chope, Cllr Symons and, of course, Cllr Rittershausen. All were wearing their official chains of office and were light-heartedly knick-named the 'Chain Gang'. Each member of the 'Gang' was invited to formally plant one of the four new trees, assisted by those Toc H members and staff who have been closely involved with the House. Among these was Phillip Douch - the brains behind setting up the house - who was jokingly referred to by Daphne Dawes as the 'original thing'.

Once all the guests had departed and the day drew to a close, the organisers got together for a 'de-brief' to discuss the day, its success and the follow-up which would be required. This level of professionalism was apparent through out the day - right down to the perfect car parking arrangements!

Sarah Claridge
Communications Officer/Editor

LINDRIDGE HOUSE ... continued

Lindridge House has, for some time, been working closely with the Devon Probation Service. Colin Ford, Probation Officer for the Community Service Unit, outlines this relationship:

The Torquay Community Service Unit has been involved with Lindridge House since January, 1995. This was in response to a letter from David Ruddy enquiring whether Toc H would be a useful organisation/project for offenders on Community Service.

Since then, we have undertaken a wide range of work at Lindridge House, fitting in two supervised workparties each week, containing on average six offenders subject to Community Service Orders.* On average, each day would constitute six working hours per individual which amounts to, over the period of time, over 7,500 unpaid hours to Toc H. Tasks have included ongoing gardening and conservation work; building and laying of the car park; painting and decorating; creating a vegetable garden; fencing; creating a goat pen; pond clearing; building a stone wall.

It has proven to be a very beneficial project for the Community Service for it has enabled us to have good size working parties and there have been occasions when it has suited us to employ two working parties there simultaneously, with two supervisors and up to fourteen offenders. The large gardens and many tasks required have enabled us to spread the workers over a wide area giving the individuals a sense of responsibility for a particular piece of work. The offenders have certainly identified with the work and aims of the

Toc H organisation, and have taken some pride in helping create the very pleasant surroundings and environment for families and groups to enjoy and make use of. Also, many of them have increased their skills and knowledge with regard to gardening, conservation work and painting and decorating.

It was really good to hear recently that one of our workers who finished his Order a few weeks ago is still returning to Lindridge House on a voluntary basis and working directly with the Manager. The majority of the offenders have committed offences of dishonesty such as theft and burglary, and it is always hoped that by undertaking a Community Service Order, their feelings of self work and self esteem will be increased as, of course, they are giving something back to the community rather than taking.

*A Community Service Order is a court sentence requiring an offender to give up free time, without pay, for the benefit of the community.

LINDRIDGE ACTION GROUP

This is an exciting time at Lindridge, with plans being made for the future of both the house and the grounds. To make a start on these, the Lindridge Action Group has been formed. Some of the things on their 'To Do' list include: building a children's play area; developing the pond area; converting the barn into a well-equipped play area; planting hedges and flower beds; pruning trees. If you would like to be involved in any way, please contact David Ruddy at Lindridge. Tel: 01626 65670.

A TOC H FAMILIES GROUP IS BORN

Judi went upstairs to ask Robert (age 7) and Ben (age 6) if they liked the idea of us officially becoming the Toc H Families Group. Both boys agreed and then Robert turned to Judi and asked "Does this mean that Ben and I are brothers?"

The idea for a Families Group emerged after a group of Toc H members, very involved in Toc H, recognised that it was very difficult to actively participate in Toc H methods. They were either "too old" (for projects), "too young" (for branches), and the other key factor was that they wanted their children to be part of their Toc H commitment, not excluded from it. Quite often there are practical problems on projects, particularly accommodation, and many branches find young children too distracting for their meetings.

Toc H proclaims to be open to all, but the reality is that our application of the methods often prevents this. We all wanted the children to be a part, where

possible, of the decision making. This was essential if we were to declare we are positive about the whole family's involvement.

We are still a new group, but together we have done several activities. Our first was to pick litter up from the Malvern hills - incorporating a very windswept picnic on the hillside. At Christmas we met and, whilst the children made Christmas decorations, the adults discussed the significance and symbolism of the food we would share together.

We started the new year with a visit to Poperinge. The children's diaries provided us with a fresh and moving account of Talbot House and the battlefields of the First



World War. A visit to Messin to see Albert was obviously significant for the children - in one diary he was the Vicar of the Church, and in another he owned it!

In March we collected money for our funds outside Nottcutts Garden Centre. As the Garden Centre is on private land, the children were able to join in and collect. The money that was collected will be used by the Group to buy paint, so that in April we can paint designs (hopscotch, netball court, and so) on a childrens' playground.

The Families Group has enthused and revitalised those who have taken part. More importantly it is providing a place for family orientated activities.

**Sarah & Simon
Cottingham**



Members of the Toc H Families Group (above and top right)

WHAT TUBBY SAID. . .

Do you recall that old children's game *Simple Simon Says*.....? Re-hashed some years ago as a pop song it was, for a time, all the rage at parties, discos, and in dance halls and discos. At the instigation of one of the more extrovert fun seekers, or a disc jockey whose secret desire was to become a contortionist, the assembled company in sheep-like fashion would follow the antics of their self-appointed leader.

Arguably, in a broad sense, as a nation we have drifted more and more towards this pattern of conformity. So much so that those who stand out because they are seen to be different in some way find themselves all too often ostracised and isolated. Many claim, I believe quite mistakenly, that we live in a more tolerant and understanding society. This view, up to a point, can be sustained if we go solely by measurements that reflect material status, ownership, social positioning, age, gender, habits, what we watch on TV, etc. Aided and abetted by central government policies and influenced more and more by the faceless men and women of big business, our individuality is being steadily eroded.

The individuality I refer to is not that born of the Thatcher era, the consequences of which are likely to reach far into the new millennium. The individuality I am talking about is that which comes from our inner selves and is created through our human spirituality, unique to each and every one of us, and our life experiences which are again unique in terms of how they affect each of us.

I freely admit that, prior to joining Toc H, I had fallen into the conformity trap and was measuring the success of my life against the sort of factors that I enumerate above. Worst of all, and to my shame, I had begun to distance myself from my neighbours, especially those who dressed outrageously, or whose sexual orientation was different from mine, or those who chose to express their individuality in a way that did not seem to fit into the society of which I was part and helped to create. Nor was this contempt and

arrogance confined to those who had freely made such choices. I had become equally intolerant of those whom I saw as different because of their situations, circumstances or needs; especially

those who expressed their frustrations by resorting to anti-social behaviour or sought solace in drugs. Whatever guided me to Toc H, I thank God that it happened before I had reached the point of no return.

After nearly four years in the 'hot seat', I find myself increasingly concerned that Toc H too, as a Movement, is in danger of falling into a similar trap and indeed is already part way down the road. Now, before you all put pen to paper to express your outrage at such a statement let me try to explain.

First of all I am referring here to the Movement as a whole not particular individuals, groups, activities or expressions of Toc H. As a Movement we are, I truly believe, in very real danger of losing our way and moving in directions that are as false as the glittering prizes we have created in our imaginations. We have strayed from the core philosophy of Toc H and, whether by default or design, have diluted and weakened the sense of God's purpose that upheld the Movement through its birthing and forming. In the same way we have marginalized the principle of an open Christian ministry that once sought to reach out to *everyman*.

Our fixation with membership as being of supreme overriding importance is another dangerous manifestation of our increasingly blinkered view of Toc H past, present and into the future. Whether you accept this or not, I can tell you that the subject of membership - with nostalgic references to the past, critical comment on the present and cynical projections into the future - is an issue



I am confronted with at every Toc H speaking engagement I undertake. This, coupled with the view of too many members that a handful of staff could and should put it all to rights, is naive and misguided. We are either a whole Movement or we are not, and, if we are not, then..... well I guess you can work that out for yourselves.

Exclusivity! What an awful word with such damning connotations. But yes, I can show you parts of Toc H that have become exclusive. Hardly in keeping with the values we espouse. And then there is the bureaucracy. No, I will not expand other than to say that if the energy taken to feed the bureaucracy of Toc H could be re-directed towards need in our communities we might not change the world, but by heavens we would make a difference!

The other problem as I see it, is that we have too few members prepared to do. Plenty prepared to talk, and talk, and talk. We have back seat drivers by the score who know what everyone else should be doing. But then another syndrome of our modern society is encapsulated by that tired phrase..... 'It's time *they* did something about it.'

During my time as Director I have endeavoured to confront some of these issues. Maybe not well and certainly inadequately. Time and time again people have sought escape by leaning on the past and quoting Tubby at me. Perhaps I see what Tubby said in a different light. So I am now going to reverse the process, thanks to John Durham, and quote Tubby back to you! There is a wealth of 'Tubby quotes' on which I can call. However I have restricted myself to just one under each of the headings that I have identified.

TUBBY ON 'THE OLD HOUSE'

"Their legacy was not a series of public griefs or private hatreds, but a binding and constraining confidence in each other. What they found there, depended on themselves; for every guest of half a million soldiers who came to Talbot House was free to choose. No orders went the rounds."

TUBBY ON TOC H AND CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

"Toc H is in effect the ordination of the ordinary man. Take those words home and tax yourself with them. 'I am ordered to help.'"

TUBBY ON THE MOVEMENT

"Toc H is an attempt on a small scale to give at least a working illustration of good, well-organised in simple ways. It challenges the will to summon up energies; it assaults small-mindedness; it lifts men out of loneliness to fellowship; it makes war on doubt until the souls spread truth."

TUBBY ON MEMBERSHIP

"A Movement is a stream, with origin and destiny, a society is a pool of social persons. The true test of a Movement is its influence on those outside its membership. The greatest service, therefore, which anyone can do towards Toc H is to use himself, or herself, as a way whereby their lives may be more useful and more holy."

TUBBY ON BUREAUCRACY

"Don't quell initiative with overmuch control. Let men make mistakes, and committees clear them up. Give them your trust; don't vote it. Give it to them. So leadership emerges, our great need."

TUBBY ON TOC H IN THE FUTURE

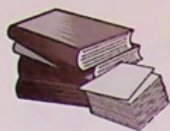
"Toc H has two choices for its future, either to be a small society complete with rules and over-organised; or it can lay aside a sense of failure and step out in the Master's Name into the wilderness of human need."

Wow! Energy, commitment, discovery, challenge, inspiration bound together by a sense of liberation.

Think about it, and talk about it, Then plan it and do it. As Tubby reminds us *"Remember The Old House and the carpenter's bench were both rejected by the previous owner."*

Mike Lyddiard
Director

A VIVID MEMOIR OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR



There's a difficulty about reading memoirs of the First World War. Partly, it's because language has changed over the intervening 80 years. Words like 'splendid' for instance, are not so much part of our everyday vocabulary. But it's also because the mind-set of these people seems unfamiliar. Patriotism seems to come more naturally to them. Concepts like courage, self-sacrifice and honour are part of their everyday experience in a way that is no longer true for us. And so you are always aware that you are entering a very different world.

I have been reminded of this by reading **The Bickersteth Diaries**, a collection of extraordinarily detailed and vivid letters home from the Western Front, sent by two brothers, interspersed with comments from their mother, and edited by their nephew, the former Bishop of Bath and Wells. Julian Bickersteth was a chaplain with the infantry; his brother Burgon a cavalry officer, later a machine-gunner and finally a staff officer. The letters describe their activities during the Battle of the Somme - their brother Morris was killed on July 1 - the Battle of Passchendaele and through to the Armistice. But it's also a record of how their feelings about the war changed over time. At the start they had no doubt that it was a necessary war, that German expansion had to be stopped. Yet as early as September 1916 Burgon is writing a very long, closely reasoned letter urging that the time had come to discuss terms for peace.

This book has specific moments of particular interest to Toc H members. Morris Bickersteth, the brother killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, was at Oxford with Gilbert Talbot. "I can remember," he writes, in one of his few letters included, "ragging him many a time about his future life, saying he would be Prime Minister." Both Julian and Burgon visited Talbot House. "The great thing which gives character to the Club," writes Julian, "is its chapel. A beautiful altar decked with rich hangings and canopy at once catches the eye... The whole is a veritable 'House of God'." And Burgon, the cavalry officer, describes Talbot

House as "a wonderful institution" and the chapel as "an oasis of peace in a world gone crazy". "We had our meal," he says, "with Clayton and three private soldiers - the first time I had ever sat down to eat out here in uniform with soldiers."

But it was not this independent confirmation of our tribal memories that excited me about this book. It is the extraordinarily vivid picture it gives of what that war was like for two participants. The comparison with Siegfried Sassoon may be exaggerated but I regard it as an important addition to my First World War library and I can warmly commend it to anyone with an interest in this period of history.

Ken Prideaux-Brune

The Bickersteth Diaries. Pen & Sword paperback. £11.95

"SERVING TWO MASTERS" BY JOHN Q DAVIS.



John Davis writes with clarity and a candid simplicity. His book is pitched for a wide readership. It has the rare quality of brevity

and can be read at one sitting. A copy could be put to advantage by every school leaver, all prison libraries and by every MP of whatever complexion, for example.

Money has enormous influence on beliefs, attitudes and subsequent behaviours. The book illustrates the pervasive influence money has on individuals and governments. It also exposes the societies whose covert yet clear objective is the bondage of mankind to Mammon. Conversely, the book spells out how we ordinary folk, by bringing our money matters openly to God, can live within a "money-crazed environment without becoming contaminated by the modern worship of the Golden Calf."

The author is a man of immense integrity who completed a career in the Inland Revenue executive. In recent years he has founded the Christian Broadcasting Campaign and its sister, the Christian Communications Commission.

Paul Rogoff

Avon Books; 70pp; £5.95, available from most Christian bookshops or direct from the author.

JACK OF HEARTS - A COMMUNITY AWARD WINNER

Jack Holland, a member of the Buckingham Branch for many years, recently won an Achievement Award from his local newspaper, in recognition of his tireless work in the local community.

The Advertiser & Review's award scheme was launched in January, aimed at giving a pat on the back to those in the local community whose work or achievements often go unrecognised. Jack won the most readers' votes for his work befriending the sick, elderly and lonely for the last 39 years. He has been presented with £100 to give to a charity or worthy cause of his choice.

Jack has been a loyal visitor at local hospitals and homes since 1958. For the last 11 years he has visited the Fremantle Trust's Bourton Road Home twice a week. And it was the Home's residents who put

Mr Holland's name forward for the award. Advertiser & Review Editor, Rob Gibbard, said "Jack epitomises the selfless way in which so many members of the community strive year after year to help others."



Photo: Buckingham Advertiser

Jack Holland is presented with his Achievement Award by Advertiser & Review Editor, Rob Gibbard.

LINDRIDGE HOUSE PROJECT

In mid-February I went on my first Toc H Project to Lindridge House. A group of seven people came together in order to plant lots of trees. It was a mixed group consisting of an alternative therapist (Val) and her 13 year-old pony-mad daughter (Gemma); a landscape designer who liked his peace and quiet (Kersen); a German special-needs teacher (me); a Development Officer (Barry -



The team "working", showing, left to right, Barry, Alan, Val and Kersen.

no need to say anymore); an ex-army bloke from the Lindridge Action Group (Alan) and, on Saturday, another lady who works with deaf people (Jo). I greatly enjoyed the teamwork, assisted by glorious sunshine on the Saturday. Having

finished the tree-planting much earlier than expected, we started to clear the grounds of rubbish and cut lots of timber which was lying around to fill wood boxes. It just goes to show how much impact a group of people can make when they all work together as a team, and the wonderful sense of achievement they can feel.

For me there was also a second benefit: my prejudice against ex-army people was broken. Previously my prejudice went something like this: "they are all machos; sexist; drinkers; meat-eaters; right-wing and stupid." I was not even aware of my prejudice until I came into contact with this vegetarian, ex-army man who works with homeless youngsters. I expected a clash between him and the alternative therapist, but no - we all sat by the fire enjoying each other's company till two o'clock in the morning! Toc H truly brings people together!

Waltraud Glaser

HODDESDON'S COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS



Late last year Toc H members and friends from Hoddesdon, Goffs Oak & Potters Bar, and District Branches entertained some of the residents from "305", a residential home for adults with severe learning disabilities.

The venue for the party was St Paul's Church Hall in Hoddesdon town centre and members attacked preparations with gusto. Ron & Joy Barnard tackled the rolls and sandwiches, (Toc H really should set up a catering business, the speed at which these products were turned out was amazing). Andrea Fairhurst and Gavin Coney, two Toc H Project Leaders, arranged and decorated the tables and chairs in the Hall with balloons, streamers and holly. Beryl Collins arrived with the food; mountains of it, including sweetcorn, salads, turkey, hams, trifles and ice cream. Not to mention the potatoes - there were hundreds just waiting to be baked in their jackets. Joy brought enough sausage rolls to feed a regiment, and Elsie Gentle brought 14 dozen small fancy cakes, all homemade and decorated by herself.

Enid had purchased and wrapped all the Christmas presents. They were brought in in cases and transferred to Father Christmas's sack. She also produced and decorated the Christmas tree to add to the festive look. Father Christmas was invited by Phil Watling - funny how we never saw them together at the same time!

At midday the guests arrived with their carers, friends and relatives, just in time to settle in before lunch. A hot and cold buffet was served and during the meal popular Christmas music was played on tapes and records by John Burgess and Douglas Harpin.

The meal over, Uncle Tim did a wonderful job with his wide selection of conjuring tricks, illusions and non-stop entertaining "patter". He involved everyone and even the quietest guests were happily amused. Pass the Parcel to music was played, with little gifts falling out at every unwrapping. This

was great fun and very noisy and went down well as it involved all guests and their carers and families.

Father Christmas then arrived, leaving his sledge outside in the car park, and distributed his sack of presents with the help of two young elfins, Lauranne and Penny Collins (David and Beryl's granddaughters). David Collins presented each of the carers with a plant as a way of acknowledging the fact that the carers play such an important part in the lives of our guests.

Cakes, teas and cold drinks were then handed around and guests left from 4.30pm onwards after being presented with a balloon sculpture by Uncle Tim.

The party went so well we even had an uninvited guest who came in from the street, was well fed and left again without anyone being able to find out who she was. Later she was claimed by another group in a nearby hall. Our guess was she enjoyed our party more, otherwise she would have stayed with them.

Enid and Beryl
Hoddesdon Branch

BRIXWORTH CONCERT A SUCCESS



Some 100 music lovers enjoyed a concert held in the Salvation Army Citadel, Rushden, on 1 March 1997. The Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire, Sir John Lowther, accompanied by Lady Lowther, were among those who enjoyed a programme of light and classical music given by the Northampton Light Orchestra, conducted by Monica Coles. The soloist was Rachel Butler, accompanied by Joan Maddams at the piano. The Salvation Army were very helpful and it was an excellent venue. A vote of thanks was given by Harry Graham. The event, by way of sales of tickets and donations, raised £444 for the Brixworth Project.

Has Denis Giles not hit the nail firmly on the head (letter in March 1997 issue)? In post-war Toc H Tubby emphasised that his object was always to try and work in and with other good-will organisations to bring Christ into their ways of thinking. This explained the great influence Toc H had on the then Scout movement and Borstal, to name but two. He always told me if possible never to do anything in Toc H's or my own name. It may not have been a great money-spinner, but the finances were, nevertheless, healthy. I have always found his dictum has paid off. Have we perhaps forgotten all about it?

Jack Trefusis
Honiton, Devon

I read Denis Giles's letter in the March issue of Point 3 with some surprise. It would appear that he would prefer to be a member of the Salvation Army or LEPR. Toc H for many years has not published its work, at least not on a large scale, but continues as ever in service in many fields. As a member in a new group I have joined an organisation where we are (exhorted) requested to help support a survival and progress programme. We inherit a situation where he (Denis) and his long-standing fellow members have presided over a long period of decline, with many years of budget deficits and recruitment neglect which failed to achieve a counterbalance to membership natural wastage in this wonderful Movement.

I am sure we would all be delighted to hear his views on fundraising and recruitment in this modern world. The original principles laid down for Toc H are still as relevant today and will be into the next millennium. However, our survival methods must surely be relevant to today's society and the Movement's situation.

This letter is written in a spirit of goodwill and Christian Faith, knowing that God's help will always be at hand to ensure Toc H will remain as relevant in the present and future as in the past.

Philippa Borchard
Ripon

PS. The only staff I have come across work very hard, over very long hours, for a poor employment package. Would or could members undertake the work they do?

I have just read the letter by Bill Bains in the October issue of "Point Three" and have again read his enlightening write-up in the March 1996 edition. I would like to support everything he has said regarding the traditions of Toc H which are so precious to our membership. Bill went on to say "The good thing thus begun may be strengthened numerically, but weakened in its mission".

It is essential that the foundation of the Movement is not disturbed in any way. Toc H has been instrumental in the cementing of life-long friendships, and we thank God for the wonderful life and example of our founder padre, "Tubby", who wrote "You need not bother about getting young men into Toc H, but sweat blood to get Toc H into young men".

Changing the name of Toc H should never be contemplated; it is a challenge to the members to explain the meaning in its original context, which young people find intriguing and are anxious to hear more about such a unique Movement.

May God richly bless all our endeavours to keep alight the Toc H flame.

Nora Warner
Solihull

Norah's letter, received some time ago, is now being published and offers yet another view on the ongoing debate about change within the Movement.

Thank you for the articles written by members of Friendship Circles that appeared in March's issue of Point 3. Those, together with the very enjoyable Friendship Circles newsletter produced in February, indicated to me what a valuable piece of Toc H work that this Method has been over the years. It has certainly changed many people's lives and given them a sense of purpose, enabling them to contribute in helping others to achieve what they have experienced. I hope that the funding will be vigorously and positively pursued with local authorities and trusts, so that many others may benefit from being supported, in the first instance, until their strength and confidence grows to take advantage of all the opportunities opened up for them in other areas of Toc H work, by their involvement in Friendship Circles.

Daphne Dawes
Chairman of South West Region

CHANGES TO TOC H MEMBERSHIP

fresh faces and fond farewells

The membership pages have been extended this month to pay tribute to two particularly high profile individuals involved in Toc H.

AWDRY - THE 'THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE' MAN



Illustration from 'James and the Diesel Engines' by C. Awdry, published by William Heinemann Ltd; reprinted by permission of Reed Consumer Books.

The Revd Wilbert Awdry, best known as the author of Thomas the Tank Engine stories, who died in March, aged 85, was an active member of Toc H for many years.

The son of a country parson, he followed closely in his father's footsteps, sharing both his profession and his love of railways. From an early age he would go trainspotting with his father, and it was through this father/son relationship with his own son that the 'Thomas' tales were born. In 1943, during his son's bout of measles, Awdry invented stories about steam engines to keep Christopher amused. Allegedly scribbled on the back of parish pamphlets, it was his wife who persuaded him to submit the stories to a publisher. After initial rejections they were finally accepted and went from strength to strength. Today more than 20 million copies of the 26 book series have been sold; films have been screened in 43 countries, and merchandise produced all generating around £10 million. In 1996 Awdry was awarded the OBE.

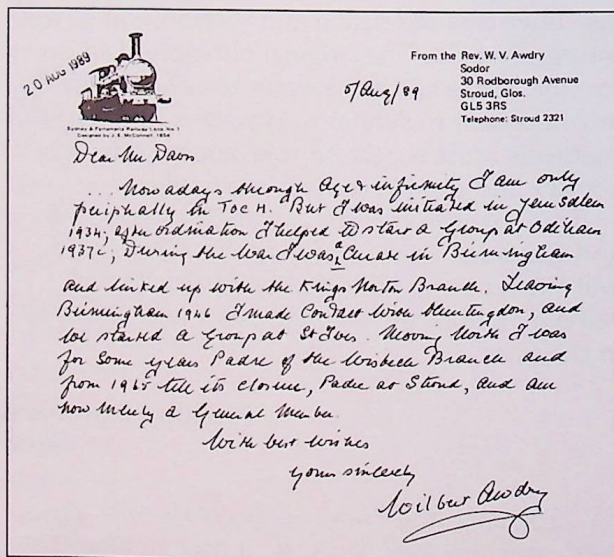
Awdry's Toc H involvement was equally admirable. In 1989 he wrote to Don Davis ...

".....Nowadays, through age and infirmity, I am only periphally in Toc H. But I was initiated in Jerusalem 1934; after ordination I helped to start a Group at Odiham. During the war I was a curate in Birmingham and linked up with the Kings Norton Branch. Leaving Birmingham 1946 I made contact with Huntingdon, and we started a Group at St. Ives. Moving north I was for some years Padre of the Wisbech Branch and from

1965 till its closure, Padre at Stroud, and am now merely a general member."

Many of us of a certain generation will have very fond memories of Thomas and his mates. For me they conjure up that warm, 'fuzzy' feeling of childhood innocence and security. The bold, primary colours of the stylised illustrations echo the honest straightforwardness of Thomas' world, where 'fair play' prevails. Human emotions - good and bad - abound as human relationships and interactions are mimicked by the engines as they get on with their daily lives in the railway 'community'. The parallel between Thomas' world and the real one has echos for me of the Toc H ideal. In Awdry's stories the engines seem to resolve their problems and differences satisfactorily - after each escapade all the engines return to the Shed, tolerant of each other despite their differences of colour and size, or whether they are diesel or steam. All the engines are able to live alongside each other, respectful of each others' roles and differences. Who knows, perhaps Revd Awdry was secretly using Thomas to tell allegorical tales of the Toc H philosophy and ideology?

Sarah Claridge
Communications Officer/Editor



The letter Revd Awdry wrote in 1989 to Don Davis, of Gloucester District.

HARUN AHMED - A GOOD MAN

After a long illness Harun Ahmed, co-founder with Peter East of the Khasdobir Youth Action Group, died on Sunday March 16, just a month short of his 56th birthday.

Harun was a successful businessman, both in Britain and in Bangladesh. He was a person of immense power and influence in his village of Khasdobir on the edge of Sylhet town in Bangladesh yet, at the same time, he was a deeply humble person. More than 50 people lived in his seven or eight roomed house, all of them dependent on him for their food and clothing. But it wasn't just his extended family that he helped. He was determined to do something for the poorest people in the village but he never helped people in a condescending or patronising manner. He treated everybody, however poor, however unimportant, with a gentle courtesy that preserved their dignity and self-respect.

When Peter East went to Bangladesh in 1983, he spent some months trying to see what he might do to help. And then one day, apparently by chance (though I have a kind of feeling that God had something to do with it), he met Harun. Peter immediately sensed Harun's kindness, his generosity, his sheer goodness, and felt that here was someone he could work with.

Together Harun and Peter built a project which they called the Khasdobir Youth Action Group. Through this project thousands of children from illiterate families have received an education and hundreds of women have learned the skills with which to earn a living and, at the same time, a new sense of self-esteem. Every visitor to the project has noticed that it has a unique atmosphere, an open friendliness across all the barriers, of poverty, of religious affiliation, that normally keep people



apart. That atmosphere stems primarily from the personalities of the two founders.

Harun was a person of a deep religious faith and Islam was the motivation behind everything he did. Yet his faith was never narrow or sectarian. Maybe this openness was something he learned from Peter.

But in fact Peter and Harun worked so closely together that no one, not even they, can say exactly who was responsible for what. There is no doubt, however, that one of the significant contributions of the project has been building bridges between the Hindus (who mostly work on the tea estates which border Khasdobir) and the Muslims who live in the village itself.

When Barbara and I last visited Harun in Nottingham, about a fortnight before he died, he said to me: "Ken, bhai, every day I pray to Almighty God for you." I found that intensely moving. Now he has crossed into a greater light and I cannot doubt that all the trumpets have sounded for him on the other side. The word 'goodness' might almost have been created for Harun. Salaam aleichem, Harun bhai; peace be with you.

Ken Prideaux-Brune

Note: 'bhai' is the Bengali word for 'brother'.

CHANGES TO TOC H MEMBERSHIP

fresh faces and fond farewells

Every member makes an invaluable, individual contribution to Toc H. In a regular feature, **Point 3** acknowledges both those who are new to membership and those who sadly have passed on. In welcoming new members we hope to give you a flavour of the person behind the name by listing the 'hidden talents' individuals have told us about on their application form. The Tributes and Farewells provide a limited opportunity to recognise the individual contributions made by those whose membership has sadly come to a close.

WELCOMES

- **R Eryl Edwards**, member of Bala Branch.
- **Dewi Poole**, member of Bala Branch.
- **Erica Hill**, member of Bridlington Branch. Erica enjoys drama and practicing circus skills such as juggling and unicycling.
- **Joyce Stearn**, member of Buckingham Branch.
- **Mark Griffith**, member of Buckley Branch.
- **Katharine Allen**, member of Dogtag Group.
- **Roger Giles**, member of Dogtag Group.
- **Christopher Sylvester**, member of Dogtag Group. Christopher is interested in cricket and football.
- **Colin Welsh**, member of Dogtag Group. Colin is a draughtsman and keen sportsman.
- **Patricia Allbut**, member of Enfield Branch.
- **LM Steers**, member of High Brooms Branch. Mrs Steers is an organiser and leader of a local play group.
- **Winnie Sparks**, member of Ipswich Branch.
- **Cliff Christon**, member of New Tees Group. Cliff enjoys computers, cooking and music.
- **Valerie Christon**, member of New Tees Group. Four members of Valerie's family are already involved in Toc H.
- **Eileen Kelly**, member of Prestatyn Branch.
- **Ann Chamberlain**, member of Regional Project Group.
- **Ann and Peter Lockwood**, members of Shire Green Branch.
- **Penelope Weynberg**, member of Skipton Group. Penelope is interested in outdoor pursuits and working with young people. She has experience of conservation and caring for others.
- **Lilian Whitehouse**, member of Wolverhampton Branch. Lilian is a retired teacher.

TRIBUTES

- **William (Bill) Bennett**, member of Toc H Stockport Branch. For most of his Toc H life he was Branch Chairman, an office he conducted in a true Christian manner. He was also active in District affairs, taking part in Projects. Latterly Bill took over and organised the refurbishment and purchase of a new hut for the Stockport Children's Camp. He will long be remembered for his most useful life in service to the young, the under-privileged, and the elderly. The Stockport Branch have lost a very dear friend and give thanks for having known him. **AH**
- **Lilian Bailey**, member of Dover Women's Branch. Lilian and her husband, Tommy, joined Toc H many years ago. Very active members, they were instrumental in starting many local community initiatives. **AB**
- **Leslie Smith**, of the late Gravesend and Medway District Branches was a practical man in every sense of the word. He believed in doing rather than writing. Consequently, his one and only office in Toc H was that of Jobmaster, which he carried out proficiently for very many years. **CAW**
- **Charles Hood**, member of Clevedon Branch. Charles joined Toc H when he was on active service during the 1939/45 War and had been an active Member until very recently. He will be greatly missed by members of Clevedon. **JB**

- **Clifford Wright**, member of Nailsea M Branch. Cliff joined Toc H, and this Branch, in 1966 and was a most valued and hard working member thereafter. From 1968 to 1974 he was Branch Secretary and in 1976-77 he was Branch Chairman. From 1989 onwards he was "Custodian of the Lamp" which may or may not be an honoured post in other branches but was one which Cliff appreciated - and performed meticulously. In Cliff, Toc H has lost a valued member and Nailsea M has lost a treasured friend. **SD**
- **Elizabeth Chad**, Jobbie of Plympton W Branch for many years.
- **Dorothy Martin**, member of Plympton W Branch for 30 years, and former Chairman.
- **Phyl Triscott** founder member of Plympton Women's Branch. A cherry tree was planted in Plympton St Mary's churchyard in March in Phyl's memory. The ceremony was attended by members, family, and many members of the Plympton Community Council. **KR**
- **Mary Haskins**, member of Wroughton Branch. Mary and her husband, Maurice, were very much part of Wroughton Toc H in the 1950s, having introduced the members to the wonders of television in 1949! After Maurice died in 1961, Mary gave part of the ground at the back of her house on which the Wroughton members built the present room in his memory. Tubby Clayton opened the room in 1968, and from time to time Mary had Tubby to stay with her, and her hospitality enabled him to relax in retreat from his very hectic lifestyle. **DP**

FAREWELLS

- **Una Lambert**, member of Spalding Branch.
- **Wilbert Awdry**, member of Gloucester District Branch.
- **James Baillie**, member of West Sussex Branch.
- **Annie Coultman**, member of Loughborough Branch.
- **Mary Haskins**, member of Swindon & Wroughton Branch.
- **Doris Humphrey**, member of South East Region.
- **Florence Maxey**, member of Leeds Branch.
- **Ivy Parsons**, member of Lyme Bay Branch.
- **Marie Walker**, member of Kempston Branch.
- **Clifford Wright**, member of Nailsea Branch.
- **Vera Garner**, member of Greenbank Branch.
- **Kathleen Kirby**, member of Harpenden Branch.
- **Daphne Haycock**, member of Wolverton Branch.
- **Harry Peters**, member of Buckingham Branch.
- **Marjorie Wright**, member of Weymouth Branch.
- **Leslie Lumb**, member of Wolds District.
- **Mildred Martin**, member of North Bucks with Oxford District.
- **Leslie Smith**, member of South East Region.

CORRECTIONS

Apologies for the following errors in the March issue:

- George Miller was mistakenly listed under the 'Farewells' section. We are pleased to report George is still fit and well and very much a member.
- A new member was listed under the 'Welcomes' section as James Coney. He is, in fact, known as **Gavin** Coney - James is his middle name.

• A NEW ARRIVAL

David, Lesley & Peter Coleman are pleased to share the news that Amy Ruth joined the family on 20th February 1997. She weighed in at 7lbs 1 1/2oz.

• CHEESE AND WINE

19 June

The Rushden Toc H Pytchley Branch are arranging a Cheese and Wine Evening at the Toc H Centre, Rushden. There will be a Fun Quiz and Raffle and it's sure to be an enjoyable evening. Further details from Meg and Harry Graham Tel: 01933 356671

SEEK AND YOU SHALL FIND

*They said my Lord had come to fearful end,
I searched and searched, then found him,
still my friend.*

*I questioned what the world had yet to give
Then in my journeying the Lord did live.*

*I wondered where his presence could be found,
Beheld Earth's grandeur — he was all around.*

*At times I could not see him for my doubt,
Yet in my quest the name of Christ rang out.*

*I set to work. He showed the place of need,
Made clear the task and sanctified the deed.*

*Though faith was weak he made each time
and place*

A living witness and a means of grace.

Douglas Bridge-Collins

• TREE APPEAL

Megan and Harry Graham would like to thank the friends who have responded to the appeal for £40,000 to buy trees at Brixworth Country Park. It has encouraged them with their difficult task of fundraising. Needless to say more donations would be appreciated. £1 buys a tree and your name is recorded in a directory to be kept at the Country Park Visitors Centre. Further details from Meg and Harry Tel: 01933 356671

WHAT'S ON

a guide to forthcoming Toc H events and opportunities

• SENIOR VOLUNTEER ACTION WEEK

16-22 June

Co-ordinated by RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme), this is an initiative which encourages volunteer organisations to arrange a special event during the week offering an opportunity for fun, frolic and friendship to people of any age who find it difficult to leave home without assistance. Further information from: Jeanette Jamieson at RSVP, 237 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NJ. Tel: 0171 278 6601

• VOLUNTEERS WEEK

1-7 June

This will be the 11th annual celebration of volunteers. Last year over 1/4 million people attended events throughout the UK, recognising the real impact that volunteers have on today's society. For further information and a resource kit, contact: Simon Molloy, The National Centre for Volunteering, Carriage Row, 183 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1BU

After the sombre tone of last month's column, I thought I would lighten the mood with some amusing cartoons I came across recently. Published in the May 1938 issue of the Toc H Journal, the artist, A H Lee, member of the Peterborough

Branch, uses the cartoons to interpret some Toc H phrases of the day. The humour hasn't dated, nor have the phrases and their 'real' meaning.

Sarah Claridge
Communications Officer/Editor



- CHANGING CHAPS -



- LEAPING WITH JOY -



- BUILDING BRAVELY -



- TRAINING WEEK-END -



- TO DISOWN DISCOURAGEMENT -



- GROUP DISCUSSION -

A.H. Lee
1938